

# NOMINATION FORM

## 2011 ENVIRONMENTAL HERO OF THE NORTH BAY AWARD

Assemblymember Jared Huffman will honor an outstanding individual for leadership, innovation, and community service in promoting environmental stewardship.

### **NOMINEE INFORMATION:**

#### **INDIVIDUAL:**

Individual's Name: **Marilee Eckert**

Current Position: **Chief Executive Officer**

Organization: **Conservation Corps North Bay**

Company Mailing Address: **27 Larkspur Street**

City, State, Zip: **San Rafael, CA 94901**

### **WRITTEN STATEMENT:**

How has this nominee demonstrated leadership and innovation in environmental stewardship?

What is exceptional about this nominee?

Please describe how the nominee's accomplishments have positively impacted the environment.

### **NOMINATOR'S STATEMENT:**

Since 1992, Marilee Eckert has combined her passions for youth development and environmental conservation as the CEO of Conservation Corps North Bay (CCNB). Marilee is considered a respected and influential leader in the corps movement, both locally and nationally. She has served for 12 years as a Board Member of The Corps Network a national corps association (including two years as Chair), is Chair of the California Association of Local Conservation Corps, and has served as a Commissioner of the Marin County Economic Commission (Chair 2007-09). Most recently, she was inducted into the Marin Women's Hall of Fame for her extraordinary achievements. She is a proven and determined advocate for youth and the conservation corps model, making her well known to public officials and leaders and influential on a local, state, and national level.

In what has been a challenging economic time with California's spending freeze on voter-approved bond funds for environmental projects, CCNB's loss of a substantial state grant, and the nation's current recession, Marilee has worked tirelessly on behalf of disenfranchised youth and the environment. As a result, CCNB not only retained all of its corpsmembers, but expanded to serve Sonoma County, created new jobs for underserved young adults, and brought well over \$3 million dollars in federal and state resources to the North Bay. Most importantly, she has fostered an environment in which the next natural step for our corpsmembers after getting their high school diploma is to continue on to community college, a four-year college or vocational education.

Marilee has been entrepreneurial in finding market niches and filling them through competitively bid fee-for-service contracts, which generate over \$1.6 million annually. Driven by this fee-for service model, the quality of CCNB's work and its value to our sponsors has made CCNB the go-to organization for fire reduction, flood mitigation and natural resource work. We have been called upon year after year by the fire departments, government agencies and community groups to respond to emergencies and public interest. As a result of her leadership, in the past year CCNB achieved the following:

- 41 miles of country creeks were maintained to enhance habitats and reduce flood hazards.
- 3132 feet of exclusionary fencing was installed to protect sensitive habitats.
- 54,590 native plants were installed to restore degraded wildlife habitats.
- 222,133 feet of trails were constructed and maintained to reduce erosion and improve public access and safety.
- 329,764 pounds of recyclable materials originally destined for the landfill were diverted.
- 327 habitat, ecosystem monitoring and maintenance projects were completed.
- 5298 volunteers directed by Restoration and Ecosystem Management AmeriCorps members gave 20,433 hours of service to environmental projects.
- 140 sixth to ninth grader students completed 212 service projects with local communities and parks and earned a \$500 federal Learn & Serve scholarship upon completing 100 hours of community service to apply towards their higher education.

- 745, 932 square feet of public lands were beautified by 140 sixth to ninth grade students who removed 8,935 lbs of trash and 1,785 lbs. of recyclable materials.
- 780 community members learned about sustainable horticulture and food systems education at the Indian Valley Organic Farm and Garden.
- 15 sustainable horticulture internships, job training, and field work study opportunities were provided for young people to prepare them to be leaders in the healthy food systems movement.

Marilee is innovative and aggressive in her approach to fundraising and has a track record of leveraging funds for collaborative projects. For instance, for a few years CCNB received approximately \$700,000 in Proposition 84 funds, which she leveraged by partnering with natural resource agencies on project and requiring a 1:1 match. This allows sponsors to keep their costs down, enables them to access funds they would not have otherwise, and enables CCNB to expose corpsmembers to larger, more comprehensive projects which become part of their job training experience. We currently own all three of our facilities in San Rafael's Canal District, Novato, and most recently purchased an 11,000 sq ft facility in Cotati in Sonoma County, allowing us to begin serving Sonoma's most high-risk youth.